

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) concept was developed and implemented by the City of Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) in 1985. They recognized that citizens would very likely be on their own during the early stages of a catastrophic disaster. Accordingly, LAFD decided that some basic training in disaster survival and rescue skills would improve the ability of citizens to survive until responders or other assistance could arrive. The Whittier Narrows earthquake in 1987 underscored the area-wide threat of a major disaster in California. Further, it confirmed the need for training civilians to meet immediate emergency needs. As a result, the LAFD created the Disaster Preparedness Division with the purpose of training citizens in the CERT concept. As of 1993, more than 8,000 people and 225 teams had been trained.

The training program LAFD initiated proved to be so beneficial that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) felt the concept and the program should be made available to communities nationwide. The Emergency Management Institute (EMI), in cooperation with the LAFD, has expanded the CERT materials to make them applicable to all hazards. The goal of the training continues to be preparing people to help people. Seeing the value of CERT, FEMA is committed to supporting the training of local CERT teams across the nation. These teams too can assist with saving lives and protecting property in the event of a major disaster.

Those who benefit from the training should thank the LAFD for their vision and initiative in developing CERT, and their willingness to support FEMA's effort to share this program with communities across the nation.

Further appreciation is given to the City of Oakland Fire Department, the City of San Francisco Fire Department, and the City of Colorado Springs Fire Department for their assistance in preparing the training materials. Technical review performed by Jim O'Brien, Certified Emergency Manager, Clark County Fire Department, Las Vegas, Nevada, and Battalion Chief Chris Hunter, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, Fairfax County, Virginia.

FOREWORD

About Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training

If available, emergency services personnel are the best trained and equipped to handle emergencies and you should use them. However, following a catastrophic disaster, you and the community may be on your own for a period of time because of the size of the area affected, lost communications, and unpassable roads.

CERT Training is designed to prepare you to help yourself, your family, and your neighbors in the event of a catastrophic disaster. Because emergency services personnel will not be able to help everyone immediately, you can make a difference by using the training in this manual to save lives and protect property.

This training covers basic skills that are important to know in a disaster when emergency services are not available. You will want to help. With training and practice and by working as a team, you will be able to do the greatest good for the greatest number after a disaster, while protecting yourself from becoming a victim.

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